

## Survey Overview

### **Survey Abbreviation: ACES**

#### **Purpose**

Produce economy-wide annual information about business capital expenditures on new and used structures, equipment, operating leases, and capitalized computer software.

#### **Coverage**

The survey covers all domestic, private non-farm businesses including companies with and without paid employees.

#### **Content**

Companies with and without paid employees report capital expenditures on new and used structures and equipment and operating leases; companies with employees report capitalized software expenditures by software categories and also report capital expenditures on structures and equipment by broad NAICS industry categories.

#### **Frequency**

Data are collected annually; statistical products are released 13-15 months after the reference period.

#### **Legal Authority**

Title 13, U.S. Code authorizes this survey and businesses are required by the same law to respond to the Census Bureau. All responses are confidential and are used only for statistical purposes. Copies of filed forms are immune from legal process and are exempt from Freedom of Information Act requests. No data are published that would disclose the identity of an individual company. Data items are suppressed to prevent the disclosure of sensitive information about an individual company.

#### **Methods**

Capital expenditures are collected from a sample of about 45,000 companies with paid employees from a universe of 5.7 million, and a sample of 30,000 companies without paid employees from a universe of about 31.1 million, using an Internet self-administered questionnaire. Prior to the 2009 ACES, data were collected from a sample of 15,000 nonemployer companies. Companies with paid employees are asked to report capital expenditures on structures and equipment by broad industry categories.

#### **Statistical Products**

The ACES program produces two reports: an annual report providing the most recent ACES survey results and a bi-annual Capital Spending Report that contains ten years of capital expenditures data.

#### **Key statistics**

National estimates of total capital expenditures (structures, equipment, and operating leases), capital expenditures on structures (total, new, and used), capital expenditures on equipment (total, new, and used), and operating leases are available for all companies with and without paid employees. For companies with paid employees, additional information is available for capitalized expenditures on computer software (total, prepackaged, vendor-customized, and internally developed). More detailed structures and equipment detail are available for reference years: 2008, 2012, and next for 2017. 2

**Geographic detail**

U.S only, no subnational information.

**Industry detail**

For companies with paid employees, capital expenditures data on structures and equipment is available by NAICS sector and for about 132 selected NAICS categories. Capital expenditures by NAICS categories is not available for companies without paid employees or for capitalized software expenditures.

**Uses**

Capital expenditures fuel future economic growth and productivity by permitting businesses to produce more output in the future. By definition, capital expenditures provide long term benefits, are non-recurring, result in the acquisition or improvement of permanent assets, and are chargeable to assets accounts for which depreciation or amortization accounts are ordinarily maintained. ACES statistics are an important input for federal agencies constructing composite national economic measures, such as the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the Federal Reserve Board. Industry analysts and businesses use capital expenditures as a barometer of future economic prospects.